

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR:

ADD-ON EXTENSION LADDER

INVENTOR:

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This application claims the benefit of provisional Application Serial No. 60/413,303, filed on September 25, 2002.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to an add-on extension for conventional ladders, as for example ladders used by painters and other home improvement or construction personnel. In particular, the add-on extension ladder in accordance with the present invention is advantageously used in conjunction with conventional two section telescoping ladders.

Typical ladders are exemplified by United States Patent Nos. 5,715,908; 5,099,952; 5,027,923; 4,607,726; 4,605,100; 4,249,638; 4,143,742; 3,428,417; and Des 380,277.

U.S. Patent No. 4,519,478 illustrates a known add-on extension section for a conventional ladder. However, the extension ladder illustrated by this patent is disadvantageous in many respects. Among other things, the conventional ladder with which the add-on extension section is to be used requires significant structural modification to enable it to be effectively coupled to the add-on extension.

It is the primary object of the present invention to provide an add-on extension section for a conventional ladder, including a two section telescoping ladder, which is simple in

construction, inexpensive to produce, and which does not require structural modification to the standard ladder to removably mount the extension section thereto. Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description in conjunction with the drawings.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides an add-on extension ladder adapted to be removably mounted to a conventional ladder, as for example, a standard two section telescoping ladder. A conventional ladder is generally 12 feet in length, a conventional two section telescoping ladder is generally 24 feet in length, and a conventional three section telescoping ladder is generally 36 feet in length. Painters, servicemen, and other home repair and construction personnel are generally able to accomplish all tasks using either a single section 12 foot ladder or a 24 foot two section telescoping ladder. A single section ladder is less expensive than a two section telescoping ladder which is less expensive than a three section telescoping ladder. For workmen requiring only a single section ladder to perform the vast majority of their daily activities, it is an unnecessary expense to purchase a two section telescoping ladder for use on the infrequent occasions when extra height is needed. Similarly, where a two section telescoping ladder meets most of workmen's normal requirements, it is an unnecessary expense for the workman to purchase a more expensive three section telescoping ladder for use on the infrequent occasions when the additional length is necessary. The add-on extension ladder in accordance with the present invention enables a workman to use the conventional ladder to accomplish most of the necessary on-job activities, and removably mount the extension section to the conventional ladder on the infrequent occasions when additional ladder length is

necessary. In this manner, it is unnecessary for a workman to purchase a conventional, but more expensive longer ladder, when the extra length provided by the longer ladder is not necessary to accomplish most of the tasks performed by the workman.

The add-on extension ladder in accordance with the present invention provides a separate extension section for a conventional ladder which is readily mountable to, and removable from, the top portion of the conventional ladder. The conventional ladder does not require any structural modification to enable it to removably receive the add-on ladder section. Preferably, the add-on ladder section has means for engaging at least two separate rungs near the top portion of the conventional ladder to enhance the stability of the extension section when it is mounted to the conventional ladder, and the width of the extension section is preferably greater than the width of the upper section of the conventional ladder so as to more evenly distribute the weight of the add-on extension section over the length of the rung of the conventional ladder engaged by the extension section.

Although the extension section will be firmly engaged on at least two separate rungs of the conventional ladder to enhance the stability of the extension section when it is mounted to the top portion of a conventional ladder, supplemental locking means may also be provided. Such supplemental locking means can include aligned openings in corresponding portions of the

sidewalls of the conventional ladder and the extension section, and a locking pin removably receivable within the aligned openings in the sidewalls when the extension section is mounted to the conventional ladder.

The add-on ladder section in accordance with the present invention avoids the necessity of purchasing an expensive longer ladder which may only be used on an intermittent basis, and enables the use of a smaller, less expensive conventional ladder on a regular basis with the option of mounting the add-on ladder section to the conventional ladder on the infrequent occasions when a longer ladder is needed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGURE 1 illustrates a perspective view of a ladder extension section in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is a side view of the ladder extension section illustrated by FIGURE 1; and

FIGURES 3A - 3C illustrate a conventional two section telescoping ladder in an extended position, with the ladder extension section illustrated by FIGURES 1 and 2 removably mounted to the top portion of the upper extended section of the conventional telescoping ladder; and

FIGURE 4 illustrates the ladder extension section of FIGURE 1 with a supplemental support attached to it.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BEST MODES
FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

The preferred embodiment of the add-on ladder section in accordance with the present invention is illustrated by FIGURES 1 - 3 of the drawing.

FIGURES 1 and 2 illustrate, respectively, a perspective and side elevational view of the add-on ladder extension section in accordance with the present invention by itself. The extension section, generally designated by reference numeral 2, includes two opposed, longitudinally extending sidewalls, generally designated by reference numerals 4 and 6. A plurality of transversely oriented rungs 8 extend between the opposed sidewalls 4 and 6. A pair of engagement elements, generally designated by reference numeral 10, are each mounted to two separate rungs 8 at the bottom half of the ladder extension section 2.

As best illustrated by FIGURE 2 of the drawing, engagement elements 10 extend downwardly from the respective rungs 8 to which the engagement elements are mounted. The engagement elements 10 can be integrally formed with the rungs to which they are mounted, or the engagement elements can be separately mounted to the rungs of the extension section 2 after the extension section has been fabricated. As shown in FIGURE 2, the

engagement elements 10 are generally L-shaped, and define a relatively large space or channel designated by reference numeral 11, for receiving the rungs of a conventional ladder for removably mounting the extension section to a conventional ladder.

FIGURES 3A - 3C illustrate a conventional two section telescoping ladder generally designated by reference numeral 12. FIGURE 3A illustrates the ladder extension 2 extending from the top section 14 of the conventional ladder; FIGURE 3B illustrates the top section 14 of the conventional ladder extended from the bottom section 15 of the conventional ladder; and FIGURE 3C illustrates the bottom section 15 of the conventional ladder with the top section 14 of the conventional ladder extended from the top thereof. The ladder 12 is shown in its operational position in which the upper ladder section 14 extends outwardly and above the lower ladder section 15. The add-on ladder extension section 2 is shown mounted to the upper extended section 14 of the conventional telescoping ladder 12. One rung 18 on the upper extended ladder section 14 engages a pair of engagement elements 10 of the extension section 2, while a second rung of the upper extended ladder section 14 engages the other pair of engagement elements 10 of the extension section 2. Preferably, the extension section 2 is wider than the upper section 14 of the conventional ladder so as to more evenly distribute the weight of the extension section along the length of the rungs of the upper extended ladder section 14 to which the extension section 2 is

mounted. Preferably, the upper pair of engagement elements 10 will not be mounted to the upper rung of the extended ladder section 14 to enhance the balance of the extension section 2 on the upper extended ladder section 14, although the extension section 2 is preferably mounted to the top half of the upper extended ladder section 14. When the extension section 2 is mounted to the top portion of the extended ladder section 14, the extension section is maintained on the upper ladder section 14 as a result of gravitational forces which drive the engagement elements 10 into positive engagement and contact with the rungs of the upper extended ladder section 14. Preferably, the width of the extension section 2 will be slightly greater than the width of the upper extended ladder section 14 so that the inner surfaces of the sidewalls 4 and 6 of the extension section 2 are close to, or abut against, the outer surfaces of the opposed sidewalls of the extended ladder section 14. In this manner, lateral movement of the extension section 2 relative to the extended ladder section 14 is either minimized or eliminated. It is apparent that the additional length provided by the extension section 2 to the extended ladder section 14 can be adjusted, within limits, by mounting the extension section 2 at different positions along the extended ladder section 14. It is also apparent from the discussion of FIGURES 1 - 3 that no structural modification to the conventional ladder 12 is necessary to enable the add-on extension section 2 to be removably mounted to the conventional ladder 12.

The add-on extension ladder 2 in accordance with the present invention is securely mountable to the conventional ladder 12 as a result of engagement of the extension section by two separate pairs of engagement elements engaging two separate rungs of the conventional ladder, respectively. However, supplemental locking means can also be provided, if desired, by drilling aligned openings in the sidewalls of the extension section 2 and the conventional ladder at overlapping portions thereof, and removably inserting locking pins into the aligned openings on the opposed sidewalls when the extension section is removably mounted to the conventional ladder.

Preferably, the add-on extension ladder in accordance with the present invention will be approximately 12 foot in length and formed from aluminum. Approximately four feet of the lower portion of the extension section will overlap with four feet of the upper portion of the conventional ladder when the extension section is mounted thereto to provide a relatively long interface area to enhance the stability and balance of the extension section when mounted to the conventional ladder. However, it is within the scope of the present invention to form the extension ladder section 2 from materials other than aluminum, and to form the extension ladder section in lengths other than 12 feet. Additionally, although the preferred embodiment of the invention illustrates an extension section in which engagement elements are provided to engage at least two rungs of a conventional ladder to provide enhanced two point stability, it is also within the scope

of the present invention to provide means for engaging the conventional ladder along more than two rungs of the conventional ladder. Additionally, although the preferred embodiment of the invention illustrates that pairs of engagement elements are provided on the extension ladder section 2 for engaging rungs of a conventional ladder, it is within the scope of the present invention to provide only a single engagement element on the extension ladder section 2 for engaging, respectively, each rung of the conventional ladder, or providing more than a pair of engagement elements on the extension ladder section 2 for engaging, respectively, each rung of the conventional ladder.

As best illustrated by FIGURE 4, a pivotable support element designated by reference numeral 20 can be mounted to the rear of the extension section 2, at or proximate to its midpoint. The support is preferably pivotably mounted to one or both of the sidewalls of the extension section as illustrated by FIGURE 4, although it can also be mounted to a rung of the extension section. The support element is outwardly pivotable for engaging a surface against which the ladder is resting (e.g., the side of a house). The support element provides supplemental structural support to the extension section when mounted to the conventional ladder to avoid buckling or bending of the extension section. The support element extends from the same side of the extension section as the engagement elements 10. When not in use, the support is pivoted into a storage position in which it rests against the rear surface of the extension section.

Other modifications and variations within the scope of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art. Therefore, the discussion of the preferred embodiment of the invention herein is intended to be illustrative only, and not restrictive of the scope of the invention, that scope being defined by the following claims and all equivalents thereto.